

“The people of our Valley want answers, and so do I,” said Costa. “These resignations are a concern to those of us who have been fighting for solutions to California’s water crisis. The stakes are too high and our Valley cannot afford for the Committee’s credibility to be jeopardized. The economic viability and future of our region rely on sound science and the truth. Anything less is unacceptable.”

Costa and Cardoza voiced their concerns in a letter addressed to Dr. Stephen Parker, Director of the Water Science and Technology Board at the National Research Council. The letter seeks answers on the dismissal of Dr. Patricia Glibert and the resignation of Dr. Michael McGuire from the Committee on Sustainable Water and Environmental Management in the California Bay-Delta.

Glibert recently published a study that concludes that efforts to restore the threatened Delta smelt and other declining fish should focus more sharply on reducing nutrient pollution to the Delta rather than on agricultural pumping. The dismissal of Glibert following the release of the study, and McGuire’s subsequent resignation in protest, raise concerns regarding the future of the Committee.

The full text of the letter can be read below.

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May 28, 2010

Stephen D. Parker
Director, Water Science and Technology Board
National Research Council
500 5th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Parker:

We are writing to express our concerns over the resignations of Patricia Glibert, Ph.D., and Michael McGuire, Ph.D., from the Committee on Sustainable Water and Environmental Management in the California Bay-Delta (Committee). The scientific integrity of this Committee is of utmost importance to the Delta and to our constituents; we would like to express our strong support for continuing to move forward with the study in an unbiased and objective manner.

Science must guide all efforts to protect and recover fish species in the Delta. It was for precisely this reason that we initiated and supported the National Academies’ review of the two biological opinions on delta smelt and salmonids and other species. From the beginning, our goal has always been to complete an objective, independent scientific evaluation of the causes of decline of listed species and the best methods for recovery while also providing a reliable water supply for Californians. It is our belief that efforts to protect these species must take into

account all available scientific evidence on stress factors and provide full consideration of the real impacts of water supply restrictions on society.

Dr. Glibert's work contributes to the important body of knowledge in this area. We understand that Dr. Glibert disclosed the nature of her study prior to her appointment to the Committee and a determination was made that this did not disqualify her from participating on the Committee. We also understand that a number of other Committee members have published research that is part of the relevant literature used in deliberations by the Committee. As such, we are not aware that the National Academies have been presented with any information that would lead to the determination that Dr. Glibert is incapable of considering points of view other than her own.

It is extremely important to us that Committee be balanced and objective. We strongly support academic freedom and do not condone any notion of political influence in this scientific process. The ultimate outcome of this important work, if it is to be considered credible, must be undertaken by qualified, independent scientists who are committed to an objective, comprehensive analysis of all of the factors that have limited the abundance of listed fish species in the Delta and have resulted in a significant decrease in the San Joaquin Valley's water supply.

We look forward to your response regarding how the National Academies plans to ensure the integrity of this process as it moves forward.

Sincerely,

JIM COSTA
Member of Congress

DENNIS CARDOZA
Member of Congress